BARRAGE ATTACKS!
726
$1.95 US
$2.75 CAN
OCT 96
1 9 9 6
40
SUPERMAN
IN ACTION COMICS
MICHELINIE
MORGAN
RODIER

IN TODAY'S SCARRED CITIES, NIGHT OFTEN BECOMES A TABLEAU OF PREDATOR AND PREY.
METROPOLIS IS NO EXCEPTION...!
HEY, I SPOTTED THE ONE-ARMED GEEK! I SHOULD GET FIRST GRAB!
SAVE IT, THE BOTH O' YA!
PLEEP!
WE GOTTA CATCH 'IM BEFORE WE CAN--HUH?
H-HOW'D HE DO THAT?
WHRRRR
MAYBE THIS AIN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA!
ZIP IT, CHAZ! WE STARTED THIS, AN' WE'RE GONNA FINISH IT!
NOW SOMEONE TURN ON THE LIGHTS.
DIBS ON THE WALLET!
ALLOW ME...!

ACTION COMICS 726, October 1996. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ACTION COMICS, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 2528, Baldwin, NY 11512. Annual subscription rate $23.40 Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for post age. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1996 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. For advertising space contact: East Coast, Tom Ballou, (212) 636-5520. Midwest, The Graffiti Group (312) 527-4040; West Coast, The Berman Company (818) 885-9708. Printed on recyclable paper.
Printed in Canada
DC Comics, A division of Warner Bros.—A Time Warner Entertainment Company

TIK!
XXX
GONNA TAKE A WHILE TO GET THE SMELL OUT OF HERE--
-- BUT IT SURE FEELS GREAT TO BE BACK IN ACTION AGAIN!
I CALLED IN A LOT OF FAVORS TO GET SPRUNG FROM STRYKER'S ISLAND, AN' I'M GONNA MAKE THE MOST OF MY NEW FREEDOM.
I'M JUST GLAD NO ONE STUMBLED ACROSS MY HIDDEN LAIR WHILE I WAS IN STIR.
'CAUSE I'VE HAD A LOT OF IDEAS ON HOW TO MAKE BARRAGE A BIGGER PLAYER IN THIS 'BURG.
IN JUST A FEW DAYS, MY NAME'S GONNA BE SPLASHED ACROSS EVERY FRONT PAGE IN THE CITY.
AN' A CERTAIN HOTSHOT COP'S GONNA BE SPLATTERED ALL OVER THAT CITY'S SIDEWALKS!

DAILY PLANET
ONE WEEK LATER...
NO NO NO!
IF WE HAVE A LAWN MOWER AD RIGHT BELOW THE DECAPITATION STORY, WE'LL END UP ON LENO FOR SURE! HAVE STAN SWITCH IT WITH THAT BIG BELLY BURGER PROMO ON PAGE SIX.
AND TELL SHIRLEY I WANTED THE SIDEBAR TRIMMED TO THREE INCHES.
NOT THREE AND A HALF.
THREE!
DAILY PLANET
EASY, CLARK. KEEP THIS UP AND YOU'RE LIABLE TO POP A VESSEL!
:heh: YOU MAY BE RIGHT, RON!
I'VE GAINED A WHOLE NEW RESPECT FOR PERRY WHITE SINCE I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FILL HIS SHOES.
I ONLY HOPE HE GETS OVER HIS CHEMOTHERAPY SOON SO HE CAN TAKE THOSE SHOES BACK!

ANY WAY I CAN HELP?
THANKS, BUT THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT I'M A REPORTER AT HEART. GETTING OUT OF THE OFFICE AND BACK ON THE STREET WOULD PROBABLY DO ME THE MOST GOOD.
THAT'S WHY I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO COVERING THAT SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT AWARDS CEREMONY THIS AFTERNOON.
I'M AFRAID THAT WON'T BE POSSIBLE, KENT. I'VE SCHEDULED AN EMERGENCY BUDGET MEETING FOR ONE-THIRTY--THAT EXTRA EDITION WE PUT OUT ON ANOMALY LEFT A HOLE WE'VE GOT TO FILL.
I'M SURE TROUPE HERE CAN COVER FOR YOU.
BUT, MR. STERN, THAT'S CLARK'S STORY--!
NO, RON, FRANKLIN'S RIGHT. I'VE GOT... OTHER OBLIGATIONS NOW.
I'M SURE YOU'LL DO A TERRIFIC JOB.
BUT... CLARK?

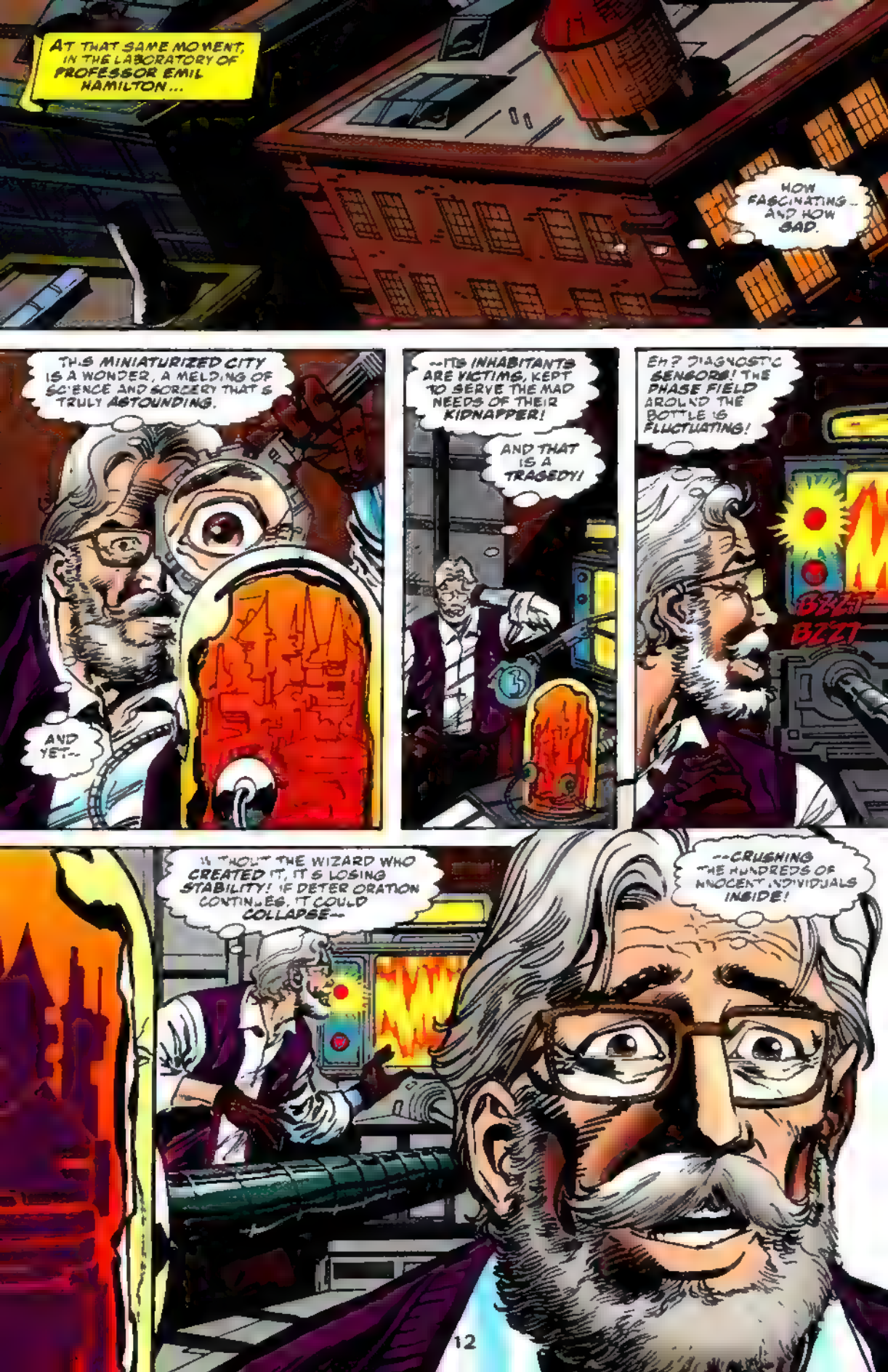
NEW TROY.
BUT ALICE~!
I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO. THEY NEED ME AT THE PLANET!
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, PERRY. THE DOCTOR SAYS YOU'RE STILL TOO WEAK.
YOU COULD TRIP OVER SOMETHING, FALL DOWN STAIRS, HURT YOURSELF EVEN WORSE.
YOU'RE NOT MADE OF IRON, YOU KNOW.
NONSENSE. I'M NOT A BABY, EITHER. I'LL BE CAREFUL. NOW WHERE ARE MY SHOES...?
DAMMIT, PERRY, SIDDOWN AND SHUDDUP!
W-WHAT?!?

YOU'VE BEEN OTHER PEOPLE'S STRENGTH FOR YEARS! NOW YOU NEED OUR STRENGTH--MINE AND KEITH'S. AFTER ALL, WE'RE YOUR WIFE AND SON!
LET US BE THERE FOR YOU!
THERE'S NO SHAME IN LETTING SOMEONE ELSE BE STRONG, IS THERE?
JUST THIS ONCE?
PLEASE?
ALICE, I...I DIDN'T REALIZE...
WELL... MAYBE I COULD GIVE IT ONE MORE DAY.

ELSEWHERE...
HAVING THIS WHOLE BUILDING TO MYSELF IS A DEFINITE PLUS.
I CAN TEST THE IMPROVEMENTS I'VE MADE IN MY ARMOR WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT SOMEONE GETTIN' NOSY.
SHRAKT!
ELEVATOR DROPPIN' STRAIGHT AT ME!
G-GOTTA STAND FIRM!
OHMANOHMAN OHMANOHMAN--!
KRAGHOOM!
NOT A SCRATCH!
OKAY, MAGGIE--
--I'M READY FOR OUR DATE!

WHILE, AT THE MIDTOWN HEADQUARTERS OF THE GALAXY BROADCASTING CORPORATION...
READY YET, JIMMY?
I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO BREAK SOMETHING BIG. WE NEED A HIGH PROFILE STORY TO CARRY US THROUGH SWEEPS WEEK.
JAMES OLSEN
WORKIN' ON IT, CAT!
OKAY, WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR ME?
LIKE SAY ON PHONE, MR. OLSEN --ONE HAND WASHES OTHER, YES?
YOU GET STORY, MY ANTIQUITIES DEALERSHIP GETS PUBLICITY.
I'M LISTENING.
IS WOMAN, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, OFFERING ARTIFACTS FOR SALE-- EXTREMELY RARE, WELL-PRESERVED PIECES.
IF SUCH ITEMS FOUND ON LEGITIMATE DIGS, I WOULD HAVE HEARD.

ONLY OTHER LOGICAL ANSWER IS THAT SHE OBTAINS ART FACTS ILLEGALLY, PERHAPS STEALS FROM MUSEUMS AND REPLACES TREASURES WITH REPRODUCTIONS.
SUCH SCANDAL COULD ROCK THE ART WORLD, DESTABILIZE VALUES, RUIN CAREERS ON SEVERAL CONTINENTS!
SECURITY CAMERAS IN MY OFFICE CAPTURED OUR "NEGOTIATIONS."
GREAT! LET'S HAVE A LOOK!
HMMM. LIGHTING'S KINDA SPOTTY, BUT I THINK I CAN MAKE OUT--WHOA!
GOOD TAPE, YES? WILL MAKE BIG STORY?
BIGGER THAN YOU KNOW, PAL. BECAUSE THE "THIEF" YOU'VE CAUGHT IN THE ACT IS NONE OTHER THAN--
--LORI LEMARIS, CLARK KENT'S EX-GIRLFRIEND!


AT THAT SAME MOMENT, IN THE LABORATORY OF PROFESSOR EMIL HAMILTON...
HOW FASCINATING... AND HOW SAD.
THIS MINIATURIZED CITY IS A WONDER, A MELDING OF SCIENCE AND SORCERY THAT IS TRULY ASTOUNDING.
AND YET--
--ITS INHABITANTS ARE VICTIMS, KEPT TO SERVE THE MAD NEEDS OF THEIR KIDNAPPER!
AND THAT IS A TRAGEDY!
EH? DIAGNOSTIC SENSORS! THE PHASE FIELD AROUND THE BOTTLE IS FLUCTUATING!
BZZT BZZT
WITHOUT THE WIZARD WHO CREATED IT, IT IS LOSING STABILITY! IF DETERIORATION CONTINUES, IT COULD COLLAPSE--
--CRUSHING THE HUNDREDS OF INNOCENT INDIVIDUALS INSIDE!

AT THE DAILY PLANET...
DAILY PLANET
Hmm? OH OF COURSE, MR. STERN!
PLEASE... CONTINUE.
AND BY INCREASING THE PERCENTAGE OF RECYCLED--
--KENT? ARE YOU WITH US?
HAVE TO CONCENTRATE... BUT HOW?
JUST BEFORE THE MEETING, I SIGNED A VOUCHER FROM LOIS LANE
SENT ALL THE WAY FROM TUNISIA.
AS SUPERMAN, I COULD BE BY HER SIDE IN SECONDS.
PROBLEM 3, SHE DOESN'T WANT ME THERE
SHE WANTS TO REESTABLISH HER OWN LIFE, WITHOUT MY.. "INTERFERENCE."
BUT SIMPLY SITTING BACK AND LETTING HER HAVE HER WISH IS A LOT HARDER THAN I EVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE!

POLICE PLAZA
THE SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT GETS ALL THE HARD JOBS -- THE TASKS DEEMED TOO RISKY FOR PATROL OFFICERS
YET, CASUALTIES HAVE ACTUALLY DECREASED SINCE MAGGIE SAWYER TOOK OVER AS HEAD OF THE UNIT.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE AT THIS AWARDS PRESENTATION TO GIVE INSPECTOR SAWYER --
-- WHAT SHE TRULY DESERVES.
COULDN'T HAVE SAID IT BETTER MY OWN SELF!
SHVASH!
HIYA, MAGGIE!
MISS ME?
BARRAGE?!?
AH-AH-AH! NO HELP FROM YOUR BUDDIES IN BLUE!
SUAN-AK-AK!
THE PLANET DID A STORY ON HIS PRISON ESCAPE ABOUT A WEEK AGO!

MAGG. YOU OKAY?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, DAN! LOOK OUT FOR--
THOK!
I CAME TO HURT YA, MAGGIE STARTIN' WITH THE PAIN--
--OF SEEIN' YOUR BUDDY BLOWN IN HALF RIGHT BEFORE YER EYES!
NO!
TROUBLE AT POLICE PLAZA!
I, um, I--I'M SORRY, MR STERN. I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME A MOMENT
GUESS THAT BURRITO I HAD FOR LUNCH ISN'T THROUGH WITH ME YET! heh!
UPSET STOMACH... OR ANOTHER KIND OF PRESSURE?
COULD PERRY HAVE PICKED THE WRONG MAN AS HIS TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT?

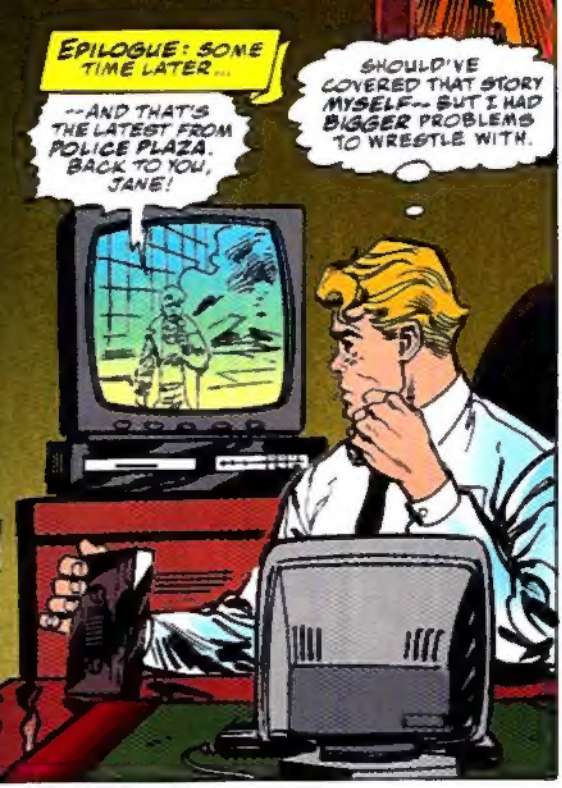
I'M THE ONE YOU WANT KARNOWSKY!
LEAVE INSPECTOR TURPIN ALONE!
THWAM!
YOU HEARD THE LADY!
GOOD!
MAGGIE'S ALREADY SHIFTING HER FOCUS, GETTING THE WOUNDED TO SAFETY.
WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO FINISH--
--BARRAGE? GETTING UP?
BUT HE WAS ALWAYS A ONE-PUNCH LIGHT-WEIGHT BEFORE!
POLICE
MUST'VE IMPROVED HIS ARMOR, MAYBE GENERATING A FORCE FIELD. NO MATTER.
HE'S STILL JUST AN ATTITUDE WITH A GUN. AND AS SOON AS MY HEAT VISION MELTS THAT WEAPON--

--huh? NOTHING HAPPENED!
LIKE MY NEW HEAT REFRACTORS?
THEN GET A LOAD OF MY REVVED-UP--
KRA-
CHOWM!
--FIRE-POWER!
TAKE SOME GOOD SHOTS O' THIS KIGGER, BOYS! 'CAUSE TODAY--
--A STAR IS BORN!
GET REIN-FORCEMENTS HERE FAST!
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN IN THE MEAN-TIME!
DON'T BE STUPID, MAGGIE! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE ALONE!
THE OTHER OFFICERS ARE DOWN, DAN
AND YOU'VE PROBABLY GOT A CONCUSSION.
THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP SUPERMAN NOW--
--IS ME!
SHA-KLAK!

IT IS! IT'S HIM!
TOLD YA HE WORKED OUT!
HURRY! EVACUATE THE BUILDING BEFORE--
I LOVE SITTIN' DUCKS!
THIS IS WHAT YA GET FER STICKIN' YER NOSE IN OTHER PEOPLE'S--
SUPERMAN?
THAT VOICE!
SAWYER!
THERE. ON HIS KNEES! MAYBE.
...HURT?
:whmk:
THINKIN 'BOUT OTHERS INSTEAD O' WATCHIN' YER OWN BACK'LL BE THE DEATH O' YA!

BARRAGE'S GUN IS CYBERNETIC, FAST AS THOUGHT.
--THIS!
CHOOOM!
WHZZZZZ!
TOINK!
HA HA HA HA HA!
I WAS WRONG! BARRAGE DOESN'T HAVE A FORCE FIELD AT ALL!
--I'D HAVE SEEN THAT HIS ARMOR MERELY ABSORBS IMPACT!
THAT BULLET DIDN'T BOUNCE OFF-- IT STOPPED AND ROLLED OFF!
IF I'D HAD TIME TO SCAN WITH X-RAY VISION--
EVEN AT SUPER-SPEED, CAN I KNOCK IT AWAY BEFORE HE FIRES?
CAN I TAKE THAT RISK?
DON'T WORRY, HOT STUFF, I DON'T WANT YER HEAD.
I'M JUST GONNA TAKE YER ARM, LIKE YOU TOOK MINE!*
YEAH? TAKE--
* IN SUPERMAN ANNUAL #2.

AND THAT MEANS--
--HE'S VULNERABLE!
M-MY TEETH---!
F-FEELS LIKE THE FILLINGS ARE M-MELTING!
YOUR EGO'S YOUR DOWNFALL, BARRAGE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE ARMORED YOUR ENTIRE FACE! BECAUSE OF THAT PETTY CONCEIT--
--YOU LOSE!
SHA-
RAKT!


EPILOGUE: SOME TIME LATER...
--AND THAT'S THE LATEST FROM POLICE PLAZA. BACK TO YOU, JANE!
SHOULD'VE COVERED THAT STORY MYSELF-- BUT I HAD BIGGER PROBLEMS TO WRESTLE WITH.

THIS TAPE IS JUST WHAT CAT'S BEEN LOOKING FOR. BUT AIRING IT COULD MEAN EXPOSING LORI LEMARIS AS AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL!
CLARK'S MY FRIEND. IF I TELL HIM FIRST, HE COULD HANDLE THINGS DISCREETLY, MAYBE SAVE EMBARRASSMENT, HEARTACHE.

THEN AGAIN, THIS STORY COULD BE A CAREER MAKER. I JUST DON'T--
HEY JIM!

GOT THAT BLOCKBUSTER YOU PROMISED ME?
JAMES OLSEN
nok-nok
uh, ACTUALLY, CAT...

I'M REALLY SORRY I ACED YOU OUT ON THAT BARRAGE STORY, CLARK!
DON'T BE SILLY, RON! YOU WERE JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS!
MINE!
YOU KNOW, IF THIS STORY'S SEXY ENOUGH, IT MIGHT GET PICKED UP BY THE BIG BOYS. WE COULD BE TALKING NETWORK!
JAMES OLSEN
BESIDES, SOMETIMES THE OLD CLICHES ACTUALLY FIT. LIKE THE ONE THAT GOES--
"--A MAN'S GOTTA DO--
"--WHAT A MAN'S GOTTA DO!"
NEXT- A NEW VILLAIN IS INTRODUCED AS METROPOLIS RUNS RIOT!
...IN MAN OF STEEL #61 NEXT WEEK!